

Members of the House, in saluting this outstanding naval officer and wishing him and his wonderful family fair winds and following seas.

HONORING THE ANNIVERSARY OF GREECE'S DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE FROM THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. As cochair and cofounder of the Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Issues, I rise today to celebrate the 192nd anniversary of Greece's declaration of independence from the Ottoman Empire.

Against incredibly difficult odds, the Greeks defeated one of the most powerful empires in history to win their independence. Following 400 years of Ottoman rule, in March 1821, Bishop Germanos of Patras raised the traditional Greek flag at the monastery of Agia Lavras, inciting his countrymen to rise up against the Ottoman army.

The bishop timed this act of revolution to coincide with the Greek Orthodox holiday celebrating the Archangel Gabriel's announcement that the Virgin Mary was about to give birth with the divine child. Bishop Germanos' message to his people was clear: A new spirit was about to be born in Greece. The following year, the Treaty of Constantinople established full independence for Greece.

New York City is home to one of the largest Hellenic populations outside Greece and Cyprus. Astoria, Queens, which I have the honor of representing, is often called "Little Athens" because of the large Hellenic population in that neighborhood.

New Yorkers celebrate Greek Independence Day with a parade on Fifth Avenue in Manhattan, which I have been honored to participate in year after year. Marching side-by-side with my Greek-American friends, I have always been overwhelmed by the warmth and enthusiasm which the community has brought to New York City. These events remind us of the Hellenic-American community's many contributions to our Nation's history and culture.

The friendship between America and Greece is based on mutual respect, a commitment to common goals, and a sharing of fundamental values, especially ensuring stability in southeastern Europe. I hope permanent solutions can be found for ending the divisions of Cyprus and finding a mutually agreeable name for the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia.

I know that the Greek independence movement was an inspiration to the American independence movement, and we have learned so much from our Greek friends.

I have introduced, in many Congresses, an important resolution with my caucus cochair, Representative GUS

BILIRAKIS. This resolution urges Turkey to respect the rights and religious freedoms of the ecumenical patriarch. It was my privilege to meet with the patriarch last year, and I know that he is negotiating with the Turkish government for the return to Halki, the Greek Orthodox seminary, of the right and independence to educate their priests and to restore their lands to them.

I want to say that I ask all of my colleagues to join me and Members of Congress in celebrating Greece's independence. It is also my sincere pleasure to pay tribute to New York's Hellenic-American community for its many contributions to our great country.

Zeto e eleftheria. Long live freedom.

YUCCA MOUNTAIN AND JOBS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise once again today in support of Yucca Mountain in Nye County, Nevada, which, by law, is designated as the site for a permanent geological repository for our Nation's spent nuclear fuel.

Last year, the President's Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future issued a report, but barred even evaluating the merits of Yucca Mountain, despite the fact that it has been approved on a bipartisan basis by Congress and signed into law by the President, and actually reaffirmed by signing the law in 2002. The initial law was passed in 1982, and the law was amended in 1987, which, in a bipartisan manner, passed through both Chambers, signed by different Presidents, established that Yucca Mountain would be the repository for our nuclear spent fuel.

What the Blue Ribbon Commission did say was any host community should expect incentives. That commitment is no different from Nevada when it comes to Yucca Mountain. And good news: the local county, Nye County, Nevada, is consenting and ready to negotiate with the Department of Energy.

In advance of Yucca Mountain even receiving its first delivery, we will work with the State, Nye County, and surrounding communities to provide incentives to benefit the people of Nevada and their communities. We will address infrastructure needs, provide additional ground water monitoring, and build rail spurs, providing benefits outside of the Yucca Mountain project.

As we look to make nuclear processing viable in the future, we can establish research dollars to universities in the State to be leaders in this field, and we will work to develop these and other ideas from State and local leaders to best fit their needs.

This will mean thousands of direct or indirect jobs across the State of Nevada. Before any of these incentives are even discussed, we know from DOE in the past that the project would yield

over 2,500 direct jobs on its own for more than 25 years under the current permit. Even after 50 years, as the project winds down, there would still be more than 500 direct jobs.

□ 1040

Construction of a rail spur could require an additional 1,000 workers and 300 permanent jobs for decades to come. All told, with indirect jobs and the project alone, conservative estimates project 7,000 new jobs in Nevada, not even counting those associated with other incentives we in Congress are prepared to work with the State and local communities to pursue.

Mr. Speaker, we need to move forward on finishing the licensing application on Yucca Mountain, as required by law. Let the science speak for itself that says Yucca Mountain meets a million-year safety standard so it can serve as a national asset that develops thousands of badly needed jobs in Nevada's struggling economy.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 40 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

Monsignor Robert Kurwicki, Cathedral of Saint Joseph, Jefferson City, Missouri, offered the following prayer:

O gracious and merciful God, so great and everlasting, we come before You today with our hearts filled with sincere love and true devotion. Now grant us, in this, the people's House, a spirit of justice and goodwill in order that the important work of this day may be carried out in truth and charity.

We know that, by our own strength, we will falter and fail. Yet we have a hope that You will never leave us or forget us in Your great shepherd's care. We are serious as we recommit ourselves to You and to Your goals. Show us the way to perfection.

Bless these elected Members, their families, staffs, and constituents in a special way this day, in order that they may continue to reach for the highest, noblest, and greatest benefits for this Nation.

And the House says, Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.